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*National Prosperity the Joint Product of Just
Government and Dutiful Subjection.*

A
S E R M O N

Preach'd before the
UNIVERSITY of OXFORD,
At St. MART's,

On Sunday, June 22. 1755, Being the Anniver-
sary Thanksgiving for HIS MAJESTY's
Happy Accession to the Throne.

By WILLIAM SHARP, D.D.
Principal of Hertford College.

Publish'd at the Request of the Vice-Chancellor,
and Heads of Houses.



O X F O R D,

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To the Reverend
DR. HUDDSFORD
VICE-CHANCELLOR of the
UNIVERSITY of OXFORD, &c.

Reverend Sir,

YOU was pleas'd to make Choice of
me to preach This Anniversary
Sermon, as a Person, I will suppose,
whom You thought not unlikely to do Jus-
tice to the Occasion. I thank You for the
Compliment, for Such I truly esteem it,
and have endeavour'd, after my poor
Fashion, to answer Your Expectation.
Herein I have been so Fortunate, as to
be honour'd with the Thanks of the Heads
of Houses for This Discourse, and with
the farther Compliment of a Request for
its Publication. Tho' it was compos'd
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with humbler Thoughts, yet I felt the less Unwillingness to comply with Your Request, as it afforded me an Opportunity of shewing my Deference and Respect to Persons in Authority, which I am ever ready to do, and likewise of paying a Seasonable Tribute of Duty and Affection to HIS MAJESTY, which I hope may be done, on Such Fit Occasions especially, without Affectation, and with the utmost Good-meaning. But the Motive of Greatest Weight with me, I do assure You Mr. Vice-Chancellor, was, by Means of This Opportunity, to let the World see, (what there has appear'd in Some a Disposition to doubt) that Lectures of Loyalty are both Read, and Favourably Receiv'd, in the University. May This be the Case Always, and so Clearly and Convincingly the Case, as entirely to satisfy the True Friends of the University, and silence for ever all unreasonable Clamour. 'Tis to no Purpose
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to dissemble what is too Notorious, I fear, that the Learned Body, over Which You preside, has been fall'n upon of late with very little Ceremony, in Severe and Undistinguishing Reflections, as devoid, I trust, of all Truth, as of Candour and Common Decency. Some People may take upon them to Contemn These Reproaches, I can't but think it the Better Way to Confute Them, by Such Declarations and Such a Conduct as I am sure No Honest Man need be Ashamed of. You have set the Example Yourself, Mr. Vice-Chancellor, in very Dutiful Professions of Loyalty and Affection, and will be follow'd, I hope, by All of Us who bear Office in the University, both Regularly and Uniformly in the General Course of Our Conduct, and more Publickly, as Fit Occasions come in Our Way. I have been taught to hope, that the Sending Abroad This Discourse, with a Publick Sanction prefix'd to it, may
do

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*do Service under These Circumstances,
and help in some Measure to clear the
University from Charges so utterly In-
consistent with Its Honour and Welfare.
If thus it fall out, or if ought else I
can Say or Do may in any wise con-
duce to so Desireable an End, I shall
Rejoyce exceedingly, and esteem it an
Ample Recompence of my poor Pains.
I am,*

Reverend Sir,

Your most Respectful

and Affectionate

Humble Servant

*Hertford College,
July 15. 1755.*

W. SHARP.

PSALM LXXII.

*Give the King thy Judgements, O God,
and thy Righteousness unto the Kings
Son. He shall judge thy People with
Righteousness, and thy Poor with
Judgement, &c.*

THIS is the Last of the Psalms of *David*, as we are told at the Close of it; which I conceive to be no more than an Intimation from the Editor, that all the Royal Author's Exercises of this Sort, ascertain'd and current at that Time, conclude with this *Psalms*, reserv'd perhaps on the score of its special Excellence, as well as the probable Date of its Composition, to close His Collection. That it was indited towards the Decline of Life the Subject leads us to suppose; but the Last Parting Strain of the sweet *Psalmist*, *Illa tanquam Cycnea Vox divini Hominis*, is elsewhere registred, and is so much of a piece, both in Subject and Sentiment, with the *Psalms* we have in hand, that

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it may probably give some Light to this latter ; which yet in its own native Beauty, and without any borrow'd Lustre, is sufficiently striking, and must affect all who have not an utter Insensibility to the Charms of Poetry.

But to form a true Judgement and Notion of this elegant Hymn, it will be necessary to call to mind the Occasion on which it was compos'd, and to have an Eye withal to the customary Manner of exhibiting such Performances. The Title runs—*A Psalm for Solomon*—and the Conjecture that gave Birth to it, Expositors, one and all, agree to have been this.—*David* Himself being well nigh worn out with Years and the Weight of Government, (as Princes, the very Best of them, to their Country's sad Loss oftentimes, must partake of the common Lot, and have no way of making themselves Immortal but by their good Deeds, which are privileg'd beyond the Date of those of ordinary Men) the Good Old King in these Circumstances would naturally be solicitous to repay the Affections of faithful Subjects, by providing, what in Him lay, for their future Peace and Prosperity. Accordingly with this View, and because Pretensions had been set on foot, to the endangering the Publick Safety, and disturbing that Succession on which so great Blessings depended, *David* thought fit

fit at this Time to declare His Successor (a Provision ever held expedient in Times of the greatest Quiet) and, having God's exprefs and indubitable Warrant for so doing, gave Command to *Zadok* the Priest and *Nathan* the Prophet to anoint *Solomon* His Son, whom God before His Birth had destin'd to that high Station. By Virtue of which Unction I see no reason to suppose that *Solomon* was forthwith invested with the whole Regal Authority, but only that He was establish'd the undoubted Heir of the Kingdom by such publick and solemn Designation.

The Forms and Ceremonies usual on such great Occasions, save this special One of Anointing, Scripture is silent about; but in a Matter of that Important and National Concern, and among *Israelites* too, no Sort of Magnificence was wanting we may be certain, and Religion, no doubt, had a large Share in the Solemnity, and much Supplication and Thanksgiving there was to God for the Continuance and Increase of His Blessing unto *Sion*.

The *Psalms* chosen for the Subject of your present Meditation I suppose to have made a Part of that Day's Devotion, and to have been celebrated in the great Congregation, set off and ennobled with all the Graces and Elevations of Harmony. For such Use and Purpose were *Da-*

vid's Psalms, the greatest Part of them, compos'd; which, tho' beautiful in every Shape, even as they lie cold before the Reader's Eye, yet ow'd much of their Grace and Energy to the Skill and Masterly Hand of the Musician, and will always be perus'd by us with greater Pleasure whilst this Circumstance is kept in view. We come now to the *Psalm* itself, which I shall first recite, as well *Simply* as in *Paraphrastick Form*, adding withal such *Reflections* as the several Particulars we meet with may chance to suggest; and afterward shall make such *Use* and *Application* of the whole, as may best suit the Purpose of this Day's Solemnity.

The Opening of the *Psalm* is quick and sudden, in Words that come warm, and bursting, as it were, from the Hearts of devoted Subjects, fill'd with Affection and Exultation on so joyful an Occasion — *Give the King thy Judgements, O God, and thy Righteousness unto the Kings Son.* Thou Lord and Governour of the Universe, from whom Princes, originally, derive, not their Governments only, but their Qualifications and Abilities to govern, continue to be favourable to our Gracious Sovereign upon the Throne, and to His Successor after Him, whom Thou hast now ordain'd and consecrated to that Office, endow Them Both with an understanding and enlarg'd Heart,

Heart, to know and to pursue all the good Ends of Government, and, as far as Human Powers extend, to copy the Plan and Pattern Thou hast set them in thy Righteous Administration. — The Song begins, You see, most aptly and properly, where the Subject does, at the Origin and Fountain-Head of Power, from which earthly Dominions are so many several Streams, issued forth to bless and fertilize the Regions thro' which they run, not, as in some Countries, to lay waste and overflow them. An Address to *the Majesty on High*, to Him who sitteth at the Top of Judgement, *by whom Kings reign and Princes decree Justice*, was plainly the Leading Thought, the First Dictate of devout Hearts on such an Occasion, beautiful in the Composition, and beautiful in the Act of the consenting Worshipers. I would observe farther, that an Application of the sort here made, at the same time that it does Honour to the King of Kings by so just an Acknowledgement of His Noble Attribute, contains a fine Lesson of Instruction to inferiour Potentates, not to *Solomon* alone, but to all succeeding Kings, and to their Subjects likewise, pointing out to them Both the only firm Bond and Cement of their mutual Confidence and Security; and reminding the Former in particular, what is the proper Aim
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of Princely Ambition ; where their True Strength and Greatness lies ; and that to bear any Resemblance to the Majesty of Heaven there is One only Way, which is for *the Kings Power to love Judgement and Justice.*

The Blessing here supplicated for *Solomon* is the Same in effect Himself afterwards pray'd for, and had the Happiness to possess in so eminent a Degree, even *a wise and understanding Heart to judge the People, and to discern between Good and Evil* ; the Same, which the Queen of *Sheba* gave Testimony to, when, having survey'd the Order and Oeconomy of His Court and Kingdom, She brake out into this Benediction — *Blessed be the Lord thy God, which delighted in Thee to set Thee on His Throne, to be King for the Lord thy God : because thy God loved Israel to establish them for ever, therefore made He Thee King over them to do Judgement and Justice* ; the Same, in short, which His Father *David* bequeath'd to Him with His dying Breath, when He said — *He that ruleth over Men must be just, ruling in the Fear of God.* Where This Principle hath firm Root in the Royal Breast, there groweth out of it a Mild, Beneficent, and Friendly Government, that Goodly Tree, affording Shade and Shelter to as many as come under it against all kinds of Inclemencies ; or, in other words, that Regular
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and Righteous Administration prevails, which the next Verse goes on to describe — *He shall judge thy People with Righteousness and thy Poor with Judgement.* By Virtue of this one Principle, influencing His whole Conduct, shall *Solomon* in all His Determinations and Actions approve Himself an upright and uncorrupt Judge, never swerving intentionally from the exact Rule of Right, ever attentive to secure both the Persons and Properties of All His Subjects, the very Least and Lowest of them, whom so far from excluding out of his Regards, He shall rather deem entitled to his especial Care and Protection — We have here mark'd out in few Words, void of all Mystery, the True, Rational, Intelligible End of Government; which is not, You see, to set up a Mock and Useless Pageant, for stupid Folks to stare at, and pay their unmeaning Homage to; and much less a Tyrant-Wretch, to trample all Right and Equity under foot; but to erect a Wise and Well-temper'd Authority, to deal out the Measures of Justice as they shall be wanted, to ascertain and secure Rights, put a stop to Contention and Oppression, and to provide against the necessary and contingent Evils of Life. Such is the Good Magistrate's Office, felt far and wide, not by those only who stand within its more immediate Influence, but
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by others in the remoter Prospects of its Power, and, to make use of an *Eastern* Allusion, descending *like the precious Ointment from the consecrated Head to the uttermost Skirts of the Cloathing.*

Wonderful, as well as most comfortable, are the Effects of such Righteous Example shining forth in the Supreme Magistrate. Subjects of all Degrees, according to the Circumstances of their Stations, will study to resemble what they so much reverence. All the subordinate Administrations in particular will take their Colour and Character from hence, and convey down in the same clear Stream what comes so pure and uncorrupt to them from the Fountain. So much is intimated to us in the words following, with a Conciseness and Significancy peculiar to the *Eastern* Poetry.—*The Mountains shall bring Peace to the People, and the little Hills by Righteousness.* As Many as are rais'd above their Fellow-Subjects by Elevations of Office or Authority, shall employ it to the same good Purposes, shall conform strictly to the Example and Beneficent Intentions of the Sovereign.—This is no more than Natural; Power under such Government will be lodg'd of course in safe and good Hands, dispos'd of their own accord to use it honourably, and much more with such influencing Example
before

before their Eyes. 'Tis impossible for Oppression or Arbitrary Abuse to keep itself in Countenance, or to be endur'd for any Continuance in such a well-order'd State: whereas, in Circumstances the reverse of these, 'tis miserable to think what poor Subjects often suffer from underling and petty Tyrants, those *little Hills*, which yet are heavy enough to crush and overlay their helpless Fellow-Subjects, so far from being discountenanc'd by the Examples of their Superiours, that they are perhaps retain'd by them for these cruel Purposes. But *a Good King chaseth away all such Evil with His Eyes*; He is awake and intent to know what is doing, and especially what Evil is doing every where. In Him the poorest Subject has a sure Refuge against the Power of the greatest. Incapable Himself of doing Wrong, He is as incapable of suffering it to be done by others, even by those in the highest Stations, and particularly in the case of the Helpless and Defenceless. For as the *Psalmist* goes on — *He shall judge the Poor of the People, He shall save the Children of the Needy, and shall break in pieces the Oppressor*. To be sure that they are fairly dealt by He shall depute None but the most Worthy and Reputable to represent Him in that Office, and Himself, where it can be done, shall oversee and take

Cognifance of their Cafe, right them in all their juft Claims and Expectations, refcue their little Inheritances out of the Hands of the Rapacious, and do exemplary Juftice on their Oppreffors. — *To defend the Poor and Fatherlefs, to fee that thofe in Need and Neceffity have Right*, is God's exprefs and repeated Command to Magiftrates; which the Good Magiftrate will moft confcientioufly obey, as well knowing that Perfons fo bereft have a Right to His Affiftance, not only as God's Creatures and the King's Subjects in common, but, which gives them all imaginable Claim, His poor, defencelefs Subjects, who, if they have not His and the Law's Help, muft be utterly helplefs, and lie at the Mercy of cruel Men, ready to take Advantage of their expos'd Condition to diftrefs and undo them. But all fuch inhuman Offenders fhall be fure to feel the Weight of the Good Magiftrate's Arm, *for He beareth not the Sword in vain*, but will ftrike it with its full Blow on the Necks of fuch Oppreffors; *He fhall break them in pieces*, fays the *Pfalmit*, fhall not only demand ample Reparation for paff Injuries done His poor Subjects, but for ever difable thofe wicked Men, as far as good Laws executed in their utmoft Severity will empower Him, from repeating them, and deter Others by their Examples from the like

Practi-

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Practices. Power thus vigorously employ'd in Behalf of the Poor Destitute, while it is attended with *the Blessing of Him that is ready to perish*, and with the Shouts of all good Subjects, has a terrifying Aspect to Oppressors, and will make those Afraid, whom Nothing can make Asham'd. So we find in the Verse following — *They shall fear Thee as long as the Sun and Moon endure, throughout all Generations.* The Exemplary Punishment inflicted upon Offenders of all kinds under the Government of *Solomon*, shall not only be a powerful restraint upon Wickedness for the present, but the Fame thereof shall long outlive Him, and Oppressors in after-times shall tremble at the very Mention of His Avenging Administration. — Note here a beautiful *Apostrophe*, or Turn of Expression into the Form of an immediate Address to *Solomon*, present, no doubt, in Person on such joyful Occasion; a Turn capable, we may conceive, of being finely set off in the Performance, and calculated to impress His generous Soul with quickest Sentiments of Compassion for the Injur'd, and Detestation of Injustice and cruel Wrong. *They shall fear THEE as long as the Sun and Moon endure, throughout all Generations.* The Continuance of *the Sun and Moon, and throughout all Generations*, are Expressions often put to denote any indefi-

nite Space of Time unusually prolong'd. I have only to add on this Head — "That the Terror
 "of violated Laws is what keeps the World in
 "Awe, as far as it is kept in Awe; which No-
 "thing so well preserves as wholesome and sea-
 "sonable Examples of Severity; and that to be
 "dreaded by Wicked Subjects seems as essen-
 "tially belonging to Wise Government as to be
 "rever'd by Good Ones."

But the Gentler and Milder Side of Govern-
 ment was the *Psalmist's* more seasonable Topick,
 and whereon He principally delights to dwell.
 The Subject of Wrath is dismiss'd therefore, as
 soon almost as introduc'd, to make way for a
 softer Scene of Mercy and Benignity, exhibited
 to us under one of the most agreeable and genial
 Images in Nature. — *He shall come down like Rain*
upon the Mowen Grass, as Showers that water the
Earth. As terrible as is the King's Wrath to the
 Oppressor and Evil-doer, His Favour and Ten-
 derness to the afflicted Poor shall be as refresh-
 ing and comforting as warm Showers to the
 Naked Ground, newly stript of its Cloathing,
 mellowing and *making it soft with the Drops of*
Rain, and enabling it to put forth again in all
 its Strength and Verdure — 'Tis impossible to
 paint in more lively Colours the destitute Con-
 dition of the Distress'd, and the Efficacy and
 Fulness

Fulness of the Comfort imparted to them, whose *Souls gasp'd as a Thirsty Land*. The same Similitude, a little varied in the Expression, occurs in the last Words of *David* before referr'd to — *He shall be — as the tender Grass springing out of the Earth by clear shining after Rain*. And *Solomon* Himself has likewise adopted the Allusion where He says — *The King's Wrath is as the Roring of a Lion, but His Favour is as the Dew upon the Grass*. The Oppressor of the Poor He has elsewhere liken'd to a *Sweeping Rain that leaveth no Food*, of which the Beneficent Magistrate is in every Respect the reverse, resembling the Soft, Dewy, Destilling Rain, *the Cloud dropping Fatness*. It is obvious to remark on this Passage — that a compassionate Regard to the Distresses and Miseries of Fellow-Creatures is a Quality exceedingly commendable in all Conditions, but in the Heights of Power, (too apt to beget an Indifference and Insensibility towards such Objects,) it has Attractions irresistible: Such Condescensions from a Throne are indeed like kind Showers from Heaven, diffusing Comfort all around, paid back in Showers of Blessings upon the Royal Head, and adorning it better than its Crown. For surely *Solomon* Himself in all His Glory never appear'd more amiable or more majestick, in the Sight of God or Man,

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than when employ'd in Acts of such seasonable Beneficence.

The same beautiful Sentiment accompanies us to the next Verse, still enlarging and growing as it goes on — *In His Days shall the Righteous flourish, and Abundance of Peace so long as the Moon endureth.* Nor shall His Beneficence be confined only to the Distress'd and Unfortunate, but the Virtuous and Well-deserving of every Sort shall partake of His Blessing, shall thrive and prosper in the Sunshine of His Favour, to the increasing and multiplying Peace, Satisfaction, and Security throughout all the Land — Righteous Men, Persons by Affection well-inclin'd, and by Character and suitable Qualifications as well-enabled to do Government Faithful Service, are the Proper and Prime Objects of Its Favour. Encouragements are lodg'd in its Hands by the Community for this very Purpose; and when they are thus wisely dealt out and distributed, the Voice of a whole People sanctifies the Good Act; *when it goeth well,* in this manner, *with the Righteous, the City rejoiceth,* saith Solomon Himself; every Man takes Pleasure in such Instances of well-plac'd Favour, and enjoys them, not merely from Good-will to the favour'd Party, but out of Regard to Himself and to the Publick. For in truth the
Grace

Grace so conferr'd, albeit it extend but to a single Person, yet carries in it a Disposition and Conduct reaching unto all; it is a Testimony, one of the strongest that can be given, of the Patron's great Affection and Tendernefs for the Publick, and there can be no plainer Evidence of His own Good Heart than when *the King delighteth to honour* Good Men. There is this farther good Effect attending it too, that it contributeth, more than any thing besides, to the Encouragement and Increase of Goodnefs; and when it comes to be understood that Integrity, and Honour, and fuch like Publick Virtues are the moft fuccefsful Recommendations to Royal Favour, Men take care to be furnifh'd accordingly, Righteousnefs increafes, and a Nation rejoices: For what the Prophet afferts is not more true of Individuals than of whole Communities of Men, that *the Work of Righteousnefs is Peace, and the Effect of Righteousnefs Quietnefs and Affurance for ever.*

The Progrefs from National Peace and Tranquillity to National Prosperity and Glory is natural in Thought and moft probable in Event, and no wonder we find it then in the Words following — *He fhall have Dominion alfo from Sea to Sea, and from the River unto the Ends of the Earth; They that dwell in the Wildernefs fhall bow*

bow before Him, and His Enemies shall lick the Dust; the Kings and Tarshish and of the Isles shall bring Presents, the Kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer Gifts; yea all Kings shall fall down before Him, all Nations shall serve Him. By such Pacifick Arts shall Solomon's Empire be enlarg'd abundantly, and of the Increase of it there shall be no End; Strangers at farthest Distance, and Enemies of strongest Power, *People, whom He hath not known, as soon as they hear of Him, shall serve Him,* shall pay Him a most submissive and willing Obedience; Their Princes and chief Personâges shall attend His Court with Presents of the choicest Products of their respective Countries, in token of their entire Submission to His Sovereignty, or for Sollicitation of His Aid and Protection, which All, both Princes and People, shall from every where resort to, and for their own Welfare and Honour be ambitious of such Dependance — This Part of the *Psalms*, which I have purposely soften'd in the Paraphrase, is applied, not unfitly, *to a Greater than Solomon*, to the Spiritual Reign and Dominion of the *Just One*, whereof Earthly Governments, the most powerful and prosperous of them, are but faint Shadows and Resemblances. The Words, 'tis confess'd, in their utmost meaning, will scarce admit of any other Interpretation; but 'tis no
uncommon

uncommon Thing with the Inspir'd Penmen, in the Heat and Rapidity of their Progress, to break away, as it were, from the immediate Subject in hand to some kindred Argument of a higher Strain, that then presents itself to their glowing Imagination; where yet, for the most part, such Images and Expressions are made use of, as, in a sober and qualified Sense, will still be applicable to the Prime Purpose in View. Thus, abating somewhat of the *Eastern* Sublimity, every Article of the preceding Account will be found to have been exactly verified in the Reign and Person of *Solomon*; and succeeding Kings are here taught by His Example the true Road to Glory. For *Righteousness*, now and ever, *exalteth a Nation*, both Prince and People, and conferreth a Power more real and permanent than any the most victorious Arms can do. A Government fam'd for its Faith, Generosity, and Honour must, in the natural Course of Things, thrive and prosper, acquire a Character, and come in time to make some Figure in the World. Nations near or afar off, as many as have Opportunities of experiencing or but hearing the Report of such good Qualities, will repose a Trust and Confidence in it, more readily unite with it in Confederacies, in Commerce, in friendly Communications of every kind. From

less potent States it will derive Wealth, Homage, Accession of Strength and Territory, in return for Protection, Security and Civil Improvements; They will resort to it as to a common Center of Union; and a Government like This, if it be not universally submitted to, will be rever'd however the World over, or, in the Language of the Prophet, *It will be a Name and a Praise among all the People of the Earth.*

Having run thus His whole Race of Glory, from *Jerusalem* to the Ends of the World, the *Psalmist* returns again, to introduce a more familiar and endearing Scene, a Scene of domestick Security and Comfort under the Common Friend and Father of His People. Enormous and overgrown Dominion has something vast and astonishing, but not so affecting, in the Consideration. 'Tis an Object too vague and too diffus'd, and apter to excite Terror than any more tender Thought. But such pleasing Images as follow the Imagination eagerly embraces, participates the Blessings they describe, and can dwell on them with a most cordial Delectation. — *For He shall deliver the Needy when he crieth, the Poor also, and Him that hath no Helper; He shall spare the Poor and Needy, and shall save the Souls of the Needy; He shall redeem their Soul from Deceit and Violence, and precious shall their Blood be in His*

His Sight. In this His Highest State of Prosperity and Glory shall *Solomon* be attentive still to all the most considerate and compassionate Offices of Government: For in Him the Helpless, howsoever distress'd, whether by his oppressive Fellow-Subject or the afflictive Hand of Providence, shall find a Deliverer or a Comforter; who, so far from being lavish of the Lives of the lowest of his Subjects, shall be most solicitous to preserve them, and to render them easy and comfortable by a Supply of all the necessary Provisions both for the Souls and Bodies of the Poor. — There may be some more dazzling Exertions of Power for ought I know, but there can be none more amiable or more gratifying to Humanity than This. Accordingly 'tis the Poet's reiterated Theme, introduc'd by Him again and again at almost every Turn; for which this farther good Reason may be given — That these were the most immediate and essential Ends of Government, most open to Popular Apprehension, and most universally felt and understood; I may add, the most productive of Affection, the best Security of Obedience, and on all Accounts deserving of foremost Place and Mention on such Publick Occasion. Much has been said already on the Amiableness of Princely Beneficence and Condescension, whereto I will only

add in this Place, that 'tis a Conduct which Wisdom, as well as Goodness, conspires to dictate. For the Poor and Helpless of one sort or other make no inconsiderable Number in all National Communities, are a main Strength and Support when under due Care and Management; for whom if Provision of some sort were not to be made, the most Flourishing Societies would soon look with a melancholy Face, and Government Itself know little either of Comfort or Security.

A Prince thus tender of the Lives and Fortunes of the very lowest of His Subjects is Himself fitly recompens'd with Long Life, and all that can help to make it comfortable or honourable; and accordingly the *Psalmist* proceeds in this manner to requite Him. — *And He shall Live, and to Him shall be given of the Gold of Sheba, Prayer also shall be made for Him continually, and daily shall He be praised.* The Kings Reign shall be Long and Prosperous, enrich'd with Wealth, and the more valuable Treasure of Good Subjects Hearts, Happy under His Government, and Wise enough to know that they are so, and not scrupulous to proclaim it by all suitable Returns of Gratitude and Thankfulness. — Long Life, usually esteem'd a Blessing in most other Stations, to One seated on a Throne seems attended with Circumstances more than commonly

commonly defireable. It enables a Good Prince not barely to lay the Foundations, but to go far in compleating and perfecting a Nation's Happiness; gives Him the Opportunity He will value above most Things, to see His salutary Designs and Provisions taking Place, His good People enjoying the Benefit of them, and reaping the Harvest of His painful Husbandry. On the Subject's Part it begets that Assurance and Confidence, which is the Result of long and convincing Experience, and improves Loyalty into a sort of Filial Reverence and Affection. A Good Reign thus prolong'd intimately endears Prince and People to each other, blunts all the Teeth of Malice, and melts even the most obdurate Hearts to a Sense and Acknowledgement of the Blessing. I will only add upon this Head —

“That the Affections and Applauses of a Grateful People, at the same time that they are a Recompence the easiest to them to make, are the most valuable a Good Prince can receive, which therefore generous Hearts will delight to pay, and Nothing but the most perverse Ingratitude can be tempted to withhold from Him.”

Of Publick Blessings One the most universally felt, and most Popular Theme of Thankfulness and Praise, is Plenty and Increase of the
 necessary

necessary Provisions of Life; which we might expect to find accordingly in this perfect Picture of National Prosperity. For thus the *Psalmist* proceeds — *There shall be an Handful of Corn in the Earth upon the Top of the Mountains, the Fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon; and They of the City shall flourish like Grass of the Earth.* The Country throughout shall stand so thick with Corn, that it shall be reap'd with amazing Produce, not only from the more fertil Spots, from the Vallies beneath, but from the very Hill-Tops, where it shall grow in such Abundance and with such Luxuriance, that the Sound thereof shall be like the Shaking of tall Cedar Trees: the City too shall swarm with Its numerous Inhabitants, which shall be multiplied out of Measure, and resemble the Grass of the Field in the Quickness and Copiousness of their Increase — Where Subjects find Themselves Safe and at Ease under a Good Government, Secure in the Enjoyment of their Possessions, and Certain to reap the Fruit of their Industry, their Numbers increase apace, and they betake themselves with all Chearfulness and Alacrity to the several Arts and Employments of Civil Life. Husbandry and the Improvement of Tillage is among the first Things attended to, and follow'd with so close an Application, that the Face of a whole Country

try is soon chang'd by it; for not only the more kindly Situations, but the most stubborn and ill-condition'd Soils are made to *laugh and sing*, as the *Psalmist* elsewhere speaks, and to proclaim the happy State and Condition of their Owners. Whereas for Want of such Encouragements, or by reason of the Severities or Uncertainties which are the sad Lot of some Subjects, how usual to see large Tracts of the most fertile Country lying Waste, without Fruit and almost without Inhabitant; Blessings, Both of them, if not appropriated to good Government, yet certainly enjoy'd in fullest Measure and Perfection under it.

A Prince, who is, under Providence, the Happy Author of such substantial Blessings to a People, tho' Himself but a Man, and limited to the Life of a Man, has yet a much longer Term in the Memories and Affections of Grateful Subjects; who, when they have lost his Beloved Person, will have His Praises continually in their Mouths, and transmit His Name and Reign with Honour to Posterity. So runs the *Psalmist's* Account of this Matter — *His Name shall endure for ever; His Name shall be continued as long as the Sun; and Men shall be Blessed in Him, all Nations shall call Him Blessed.* A Reign mark'd with such Memorable Blessings shall be Immortal without the Help of History to record it, shall
be

be handed down from Father to Son, and honour'd with the Praises of Posterity, on whom the Blessings of it shall descend, and with the Testimony of the Whole World, which shall, one way or other, be the Better for it — To wish to have their Services subsist to After-times, and Themselves honour'd on the Account of them, is an Ambition natural to Noble Minds, and every way worthy of them. But whether this be wish'd or not, 'tis a Reward usually attendant upon Merit of such an Exalted Kind. The Blessings of a Good Reign are not easily effac'd or forgotten, but subsist oftentimes in their full Force when the Beneficent Author of them is no more. Nay even when the Blessings themselves are worn out, or grown too old to be distinctly remembred, the Good Reign will be current still, and Men will talk of the Happy Times in general, the Particulars whereof are past their Memories. Nor is it any thing so uncommon to see Good Princes live again by the Prevalence of their Examples, and benefit a People long after their Deaths, by the Propagation of their Principles, and the Communication of their Actions, and the Veneration that is paid to their Memories — I can't help observing on this Part of the *Psalms*, with what exquisite Art and Skill the Prince's Glory and His People's Happi-

Happiness are here alternated and interwoven, and seem to grow out of each other in the Composition, as in Fact they do in the Political State of Things.

The Recital and hopeful Prospect of so much Publick Happiness was enough to gladden the Hearts of the coldest Worshipers, and to lift them up in Gratitude to the Adorable Author of all Good and Dispenser of Blessings both to Individuals and to Communities, the *Great and Only Potentate, the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords*. Here the Solemnity first opened, and at the same Point as fitly closes in a Triumphant Strain of Thanksgiving to the Supreme Majesty of Heaven, wherein we may suppose the Whole Assembly to unite, and to fill up with one accord the General Chorus and Acclamation. — *Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only doth wondrous Things; and Blessed be His Glorious Name for ever, and let the whole Earth be filled with His Glory — Amen and Amen*. For such abundant Blessings be the Name of God, the God of this Chosen People, and Stupendous Source both of their Greatness and Happiness, for ever honour'd and ador'd by Us; and not by Us only but by our latest Posterity; and may all the Kingdoms of the Earth come hereafter to the Knowledge of His Truth, partake of His Goodness, and pro-

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claim His Glory — This is Patriotism in its true Spirit and Extent, having Religion, Love of Country, and Universal Benevolence conjoin'd; Principles not barely consistent, but inseperable from each other. For a Regard to the Welfare of one's Country necessarily includes a Regard to the Deity on whom that Welfare must so much depend; and Religion can subsist but very precariouly and imperfectly without Regard to the Creatures of God, who, if not of the same Country, are yet of the same Kind, and Members too of a Community a little more enlarg'd; whom therefore Humanity knows not how to exclude from the Care of Providence, but is most desirous to comprehend them under it, that *the same Lord over All may be rich unto All that call upon Him* — The Latter Clause of the Benediction is fitly interpreted to respect that Superiour and Spiritual Dominion, which was to take its Rise too from the House and Lineage of *David*, and whereof we may suppose Him to have had clearer Communications towards the Close of Life; a Dominion whose Foundations, as I said, were then laid in *David's* House, which, since that Time, has begun its Progress upon Earth, is now by many secret Steps and Advances going on to the Universality foretold by the *Psalmist*, and will subsist in its
utmost

utmost Strength and Splendor, when all the Kingdoms of the World and the Glories of them are pass'd away. ^a

I have now done with explaining and enlarging on this beautiful *Psalms*; in what Light Others may have been us'd to consider it I know not, but for myself will be free to declare, that I esteem it the most compleat and finish'd Draught extant upon the Subject, and find Nothing in all Heathen Antiquity deserving to be compar'd with it. ^b Proceed we now to make such Uses of the Whole, as the present Solemnity points out to us.

To recite and expatiate upon the Blessings of Government might be Discourse full of Offence

^a Should it be objected to the foregoing Exposition, that therein due Regard is not shewn to the *Spiritual Intention* of the *Psalms*; such Objector will please to remember, that if there be a *Spiritual Meaning*, there is also a *Literal* one most certainly, the *Plainer Meaning* of the two, and only *Proper* one for our Purpose. *Spiritual Meanings* at Fit Times and in Good Hands may be Good Things; but it has not serv'd to increase one's Fondness for such Meanings, to have seen them so often pursu'd of late to the utter Loss of All Meaning, and to the miserably defacing and maiming several fine Portions of Scripture.

^b It was once intended to subjoin some similar Sentiments and Allusions from Classic Authors of best Note; but upon farther Thought it seem'd probable, that several such would readily occur to Readers conversant in that Way, who may be as well pleas'd with recollecting them Themselves; and Others, 'tis presum'd, will have no Difficulty to dispense with them.

to Bad Governours, but is certainly one of the best Compliments that can be paid to Good Ones. For All, who have their Feelings about them, will be forward to make the Application, and the more so perhaps for being left at Liberty to do it. My Design is not therefore to draw long and labour'd Parallels through each Particular of the preceding Account; after the Reflections already made (whereof the Intent, I trust, is too plain to be mistaken) a more formal Application would be minute and tedious, and no better than an Affront to your Understanding and Affection. — Some Things there are too Notorious to want or even to bear enforcing, which are best referr'd to Mens own Feelings for the Truth of them. Yet, that I may not seem to decline an Occasion, not barely warranting but challenging, from the Preacher to be sure, some more Explicit Declaration of Duty and Affection, let me avow once for all — “That the
 “Characters of Justice and Generosity, of unva-
 “ried Attention to the Welfare of this Nation,
 “and unviolated Regard to All the Rights of
 “All His Subjects, are so deeply and indelibly
 “stamp'd on HIS MAJESTY's Mild and
 “Gracious Government; and the Effects there-
 “of so sensibly felt in the Spirit and Prosperous
 “Estate of His People, that (All Reproachful
 Appel-

“Appellations apart I will only say) They
 “must be *Dim Eyes that cannot see, and Gross*
 “*Hearts that will not understand:*” I trust I am
 speaking to None Such but unto Wise Men,
 who have their Eyes open to see and know the
 Things that so evidently belong to their Own
 and the Nation’s Peace and Prosperity. From
 this View of them some Emotions of Gratitude
 cannot fail to arise in our Minds, and an Inclination
 to consider seriously, whence so Great
 Blessings are deriv’d to us, and what are the Returns
 decent and proper to be made on our Parts.

The Psalm above explain’d at its very Entrance
 has intimated to us, and, without such Intimation,
 our own Understandings might have told us, where
 our First Thanks are due, to that Supreme Majesty,
 I mean, *Who is only the most Highest over all the Kingdoms of the Earth;*
in Whose Hand are the Hearts of Kings, as the Rivers of Water,
to turn them whithersoever He will, and to appoint them
 as Instruments of Prosperity or Desolation to a Nation.
 That the Almighty Power interests itself in the Fate
 of Kingdoms, and interposes in this manner to make
 them Happy or Miserable by putting down One and
 setting up Another, and by protecting and preserving
 Princes, We of this Nation can need no other Proof
 than our own Pregnant Experience.

Facts

Facts afar off or fresh within every one's Memory are Testimonies of this Truth never to be forgotten by us: And in full Assurance of it, I doubt not, we are all here assembled, and have been making our Supplication and Thanksgiving unto God for the Continuance and Increase of His Blessing on Our Sovereign. And God be prais'd, that Those He has appointed to rule over us are Such as we can Truly Thank Him for; and that Good Men can come together on these Occasions, and discharge their Duty to God and their King, Heartily and Honestly, without any secret Softenings or Reservations.

But Providence means not so entirely to engross our Thankfulness for its Blessings, as to leave us unmindful of the Immediate Hand that reaches them forth to us. Its kind Instrument must be thank'd too, and highly honour'd, and cordially belov'd by us: and where *great Quietness is enjoy'd* by the Wisdom of the Sovereign, *and very Worthy Deeds are done unto a Nation by His Providence*, Good Subjects will know how to value such Benefits, and *accept them always in all Places with all Thankfulness*; will endeavour not to be wanting in suitable Returns for them, but labour to the utmost of their Power to improve and help forward the Publick Welfare. And much it will always be in their Power, in
such

such a Government as Ours, where the General Voice, and Acceptance, and Concurrence are so often wanted; in defect whereof the best-concerted Endeavours of Superiours may frequently miscarry, or fall short of their intended Aim. In the Case of Ordinary and Private Favours Respect, and Acknowledgement, and some suitable Return on the Side of the Oblig'd is commonly look'd for, and Perverse or Ungrateful are the best Names we give to those who pay no regard to these Conditions. To Good Government, One of the greatest and most extensive Benefits, the Same must undoubtedly be due in Proportion, and will be paid by all who know what Gratitude, or Honour, or Publick Good, or their own Private Interests mean. So much, I say, must be due to Good Government in general, and if so, to That Government most certainly, which has approv'd itself Faithful in a long Course of Trial, and which an Experience of almost Thirty Years has taught all Good Men to revere and honour so highly. Fidelity then and Affection, Clear, and Open, and Honest Affection, express'd in all the Proper Acts and Offices of it, is apparently Every Good Subject's Part; what such Proper Offices are Mens respective Stations and Opportunities must point out to them.

Some,

Some, by means of their Higher Rank or more Enlarg'd Understandings, are call'd to the Honourable Office of Advising their Sovereign in the Weightier Affairs of Government; which Strict Affection will prompt them to do Faithfully and Courageously, according to their own best Informations, and with a fix'd Attention to the Common Interest and That of their Master, which Good Policy will never put asunder.

To Some it belongs, in Conjunction with the Sovereign, to enact the necessary Laws, and to furnish other, both constant and occasional, Provisions for Publick Service. Where True Affection is, it will shew itself in Such by accelerating and setting forward the Good Work of Government, by chearfully affording it every Sort of Support, and, on all Special Occasions, by reposing a ready Trust and Confidence in Those who are known to be Incapable of abusing it. And to the Praise of These Our Fellow-Subjects it should be spoken, that on No Occasion have They been wanting, either in Profession or Performance, to Their King and Country, and, on a late Alarming Occasion in particular, were forward to speak a Language and pursue a Conduct that spread Courage throughout the Nation, and infus'd no less Terror into its Enemies, who may well be afraid
to

to give Open Disturbance to a Government supported by the Hands and Hearts of a Loyal and Grateful People.

Others have it in Charge to fight the King's Battles, and to go forth against His and Their Enemies; with what Alacrity and Resolution Those Enemies Themselves be Witnesses. In the same Spirit, seconded with the Warmest Wishes of the whole Nation, are Many of our Brave Countrymen now embark'd, to assert *British* Rights, and put a stop to Treacherous Encroachments: Success attend their Righteous Cause and Resolute Support of it; may They bring Home Victory and Security from Ambitious Rivals, and a Safe and Free Course to obstructed Commerce; and may *British* Valour never fail of its Reward from *British* Generosity.

Among the rest of our Fellow-Subjects WE have our Part assign'd us too, and a Part it is of no trifling Consideration or Account — To form the Principles and Manners of the rising Generation; to teach Men betimes the Reverence due to Authority, to honour their King and love their Country; in a Word, to make Good Men and Good Subjects, and to send them forth furnish'd with every virtuous Quality and Accomplishment for the future Service

THE
MORALITY
OF
THE
GOSPEL
OF
MATTHEW

